

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, AO, CG

SUBJECT: SHABA INVASION: - U.S. PRESS TREATMENT
APRIL 4-5

1. FOLLOWING IS ROUNDUP OF U.S. PRESS REACTION TO SHABA INVASION.
2. CBS TV NEWS CARRIED REPORT FROM STADIUM ON RALLY, ALSO REPORTED EXPULSION OF AP CORRESPONDENT (4/4)
3. NEW YORK TIMES (4/5)

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-- AP REPORTS FROM KINSHASA THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE BROKE OFF RELATIONS WITH CUBA, CHARGING THAT IT HAD UNCOVERED EVIDENCE THAT CUBA WAS INVOLVED IN THE INVASION OF SHABA PROVINCE BY REBELS BASED IN ANGOLA.

4. WASHINGTON POST (4/5)

-- ROBIN WRIGHT REPORTS FROM KINSHASA THAT ZAIRE BROKE OFF RELATIONS WITH CUBA TODAY, CHARGING THAT A CUBAN DIPLOMAT BASED THERE HAD BEEN FOUND WITH IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE OF CUBA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE KATANGA REBELLION.

-- A FULL-PAGE ADVERTISEMENT REPRINTS AN EDITORIAL FROM THE TOLEDO BLADE HEADED "ZAIRE IS NOT ANOTHER VIETNAM", NO INDICATION OF WHO PAID FOR AD, BUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN "GROUP OF TEN" HAS RECENTLY PLACED SIMILAR ADS. BEGIN TEXT -- THERE IS A STRANGE MALADY IN THIS COUNTRY TODAY THAT IS IMPEDING A CLEAR VIEW OF OUR WORLD RESPONSIBILITIES. IT STEMS FROM THE DANGEROUS IDEA THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD, IN EFFECT, TURN ITS BACK ON CRISES ABROAD LEST IT GET BOGGED DOWN IN ANOTHER VIETNAM.

WE SAW THIS AT WORK LAST YEAR IN NERVOUS CONCERN OVER BECOMING INVOLVED IN ANGOLA AND RHODESIA. AND WE SEE IT TODAY IN STRIDENT WARNINGS THAT WE MUST AVOID INVOLVEMENT IN ZAIRE UNLESS WE WANT TO RISK ANOTHER VIETNAM. BUT WHAT ACTUALLY, WERE THOSE LESSONS?

THE BLADE BELIEVES THAT CHIEF AMONG THEM WERE THESE: IT IS UTTER FOLLY FOR THE UNITED STATES TO FIGHT A LAND WAR IN ASIA. THIS NATION SHOULD NEVER AGAIN COUNT ON MOLDING AN EFFECTIVE MILITARY FORCE BY DRAFTING MANPOWER -- EITHER FOR COMBAT ABROAD OR DUTY ON THE HOMEFRONT--WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY SEE NO CLEAR THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES. THERE MUST ALWAYS BE A WILLINGNESS TO ADMIT A MISTAKE AND TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CORRECT AN ERROR, EVEN IF IT MEANS WITHDRAWING FROM A MILITARY VENTURE THAT IS TURNING INTO A DISASTER, AS WAS THE CASE IN VIETNAM.

BUT THE SITUATION IN ZAIRE TODAY CAN IN NO WAY BE COMPARED TO THAT IN INDOCHINA A DECADE OR MORE AGO. MUCH OF AFRICA, UNLIKE ASIA, WAS CARVED INTO MYRIAD COLONIAL ENTITIES IN THE LAST CENTURY, WITH INNUMERABLE TRIBAL AND REGIONAL LOYALTIES AND CONCERNS. AND AS THESE NEW AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE GAINED INDEPENDENCE AND BEGUN TO STAKE OUT THEIR NATIONAL INTERESTS, IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THEY EMERGED UNDER WEAK, INEXPERIENCED GOVERNMENTS INCAPABLE OF DEALING WITH ARMED CHALLENGES FROM WITHIN OR WITHOUT.

THUS PRESIDENT CARTER'S TIMELY DECISION TO SEND MOD-EST AID TO ZAIRE WAS COMPLETELY JUSTIFIED AS A MEASURED RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM A FRIENDLY, IF INEPT, GOVERNMENT IN NEED OF HELP. AND IF MORE MEANING-

FUL SUPPORT IS REQUIRED BY ZAIRE IN ITS PRESENT DIFFICULTIES, IT SHOULD BE PROVIDED.

ZAIRE, TO BE SURE, IS ONLY ONE PART OF FERMENT SWEEPING AFRICA, WHERE THE SOVIET UNION IS ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH A FAR LARGER ROLE FOR ITSELF. THE RECENT TOURS THERE BY SOVIET PRESIDENT PODGORNYY AND CUBA'S PREMIER CASTRO ARE OBVIOUSLY CALCULATED TO INCREASE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND PRESTIGE IN THAT CONTINENT. AMERICA MUST FACE THE FACT THAT UNLESS THE UNITED STATES COM-MITS ITSELF MORE VIGOROUSLY TO OFFSETTING, SOVIET-INSPIRED INTERVENTION IN AFRICA, IT RISKS BEING EASED OUT OF THAT MOST STRATEGIC PART OF THE WORLD.

CRITICS OF AN ACTIVIST FOREIGN POLICY FOR THIS NATION ARE WONT TO CHARACTERIZE THIS COUNTRY DISPARAGINGLY AS A WOULD-BE "POLICEMAN OF THE WORLD." BUT HISTORICALLY, THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE NATION OR ANOTHER THAT HAS DOM-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INATED ITS WORLD BECAUSE OF ITS STATURE, ITS POWER, ITS WEALTH. THAT WILL NOT CHANGE UNTIL THE UNITED NATIONS GAINS MATURITY AND UNIVERSAL SUPPORT TO THE POINT THAT IT WILL BE ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY HELP NATIONS RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES WITHOUT BLOODSHED.

UNTIL THAT POINT IS REACHED--IF IT EVER IS--THE BASIC QUESTION THAT MUST BE RESOLVED IS WHETHER THE LEADERSHIP IN THE WORLD TODAY WILL BE EXERCISED BY THE UNITED STATES OR THE SOVIET UNION.

IT IS THE BLADE'S CONVICTION THAT THIS ROLE SHOULD BE FILLED BY THE UNITED STATES. THIS CAN BE DONE ONLY IF THIS NATION USES ITS INFLUENCE AND MIGHT FIRMLY BUT RESPONSIBLY -- NOT ONLY IN ZAIRE BUT ALSO IN CRUCIAL TROUBLE SPOTS ELSEWHERE--WITH NO SUGGESTION AT HOME OR ABROAD THAT AMERICA WOULD WILLINGLY ABANDON ITS RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE WORLD SCENE BECAUSE IT ENCOUNTERED DEFEAT IN THE JUNGLES OF VIETNAM. END TEXT

5. THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR (4/5)

-- DAVID ANABLE WRITES FROM NEW YORK THAT A NEW EFFORT APPEARS TO BE UNDERWAY TO RECRUIT AMERICAN AND BRITISH MERCENARIES TO FIGHT IN AFRICA - THIS TIME IN ZAIRE. ADS APPEARED IN THE FRESNO BEE REQUESTING RESUMES FROM PEOPLE WITH MILITARY BACKGROUNDS FOR "HIGH RISK" WORK IN AFRICA AT UP TO DOLLARS 2,000 A MONTH. THE CIA HAS CATEGORICALLY DENIED ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE MERCENARY RECRUITING.

BEGIN TEXT -- (EXCERPTS)

-- A NEW ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT AMERICAN AND BRITISH MERCENARIES TO FIGHT IN AFRICA APPEARS TO BE GETTING UNDER WAY.

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A PREVIOUS MERCENARY VENTURE INVOLVING BRITONS AND AMERICANS ENDED IN A FIASCO, IMPRISONMENT, AND DEATH IN ANGOLA LAST YEAR.

NOW, IF SOURCES INVOLVED IN BOTH THE 1976 ANGOLAN" EPISODE AND THE CURRENT EFFORT ARE TO BE BELIEVED, THE OSTENSIBLE AIM OF THE RECRUITING IS TO FIND 100 AMERICAN EX-SERVICEMEN AND 350 BRITONS TO JOIN ZAIRE GOVERNMENT FORCES FIGHTING KATANGAN REBELS IN SOUTHERN ZAIRE.

THE PRO-WESTERN GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE'S PRESIDENT MOBUTU SESE SEKO IS HAVING DIFFICULTY REPULSING SEVERAL THOUSAND KATANGAN EXILES WHO CROSSED INTO ZAIRE FROM ANGOLA MARCH 8. LATEST REPORTS INDICATE THE REBELS HAVE TAKEN SEVERAL TOWNS IN THE PROVINCE OF SHABA (FORMERLY KATANGA) WHICH CONTAINS MUCH OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN NATION'S HUGE MINERAL SOURCES.

THE FIRST VISIBLE SIGN IN THE UNITED STATES OF A NEW MERCENARY RECRUITING EFFORT WAS A "HELP WANTED" ADVERTISEMENT PLACED IN THE FRESNO BEE (CALIFORNIA) ON APRIL 1. IT ASKED FOR RESUMES FROM PEOPLE WITH MILITARY BACKGROUNDS FOR "HIGH RISK" WORK IN AFRICA AT DOLLARS 1,200 TO 2,000 A MONTH, DEPENDENT ON QUALIFICATIONS.

IN ADDITION, AN AMERICAN MERCENARY SOURCE WHO RECENTLY RETURNED FROM AFRICA CLAIMS THAT THE ORGANIZATION WHICH LAST YEAR RECRUITED THE BRITONS FOR ANGOLA NOW IS LOOKING FOR FRESH BRITISH RECRUITS TO GO TO ZAIRE.

NEITHER BRITAIN NOR THE UNITED STATES APPEAR TO HAVE ADEQUATE LAWS TO PREVENT MERCENARY RECRUITMENTS AND ENLISTMENTS. BUT BOTH GOVERNMENTS EXPRESSED STRONG DISAPPROVAL OF THE 1976 INTERVENTION AND DENIED ANY INVOLVEMENT.

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HERBERT HETU, SPOKESMAN FOR THE U.S. CIA, ASKED ABOUT

THE LATEST REPORTS OF MERCENARY RECRUITING FOR ZAIRE, SAID:
"WE HAVE ABSOLUTELY, CATEGORICALLY NOTHING TO DO WITH
RECRUITING AMERICANS OR ANYBODY ELSE AS MERCENARIES ANY-
WHERE IN AFRICA."

WHATEVER THE INVASION'S ORIGINS, ANY ZAIRIAN ATTEMPT
TO USE WHITE MERCENARIES TO COUNTER IT WOULD LIKELY
TO BE WIDELY VIEWED OUTSIDE ZAIRE AS A SIGN OF DESP-
PERATION - PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE RECENT PRECORD OF
SUCH MERCENARIES. END OF TEXT
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